Dublin, September 7. 1855

Dear Mr May — The letter which accompanies this [or which this accompanies] was sent open to me some days ago, with a note from Mr Armistead, in which he said it was for my reading as well as yours; and that he gave it into my charge to forward when an opportunity offerred. Opportunities are almost as much open to him as to me. However, as P. Pillsbury is not so likely to go soon as he seemed to be then, I had better commit the letter to Her Majesty's care, & in doing so I will make a few remarks about the state of things here. I had a letter from P.P. yesterday. He tells me that he has been encouraged to remain by some friends — and that from the way Julia Griffiths is succeeding with G. Thompson, in getting Douglass puffed in the *Empire*, & from somebody having said in that paper that the English Peasant is as badly or worse off than the Carolina Slave, he sees it is necessary to have some one in the way to prevent mischief. He complains that the *Liberator* has been lauding George Thompson and copying from the *Empire* an article written by him (P.P.) and published as editorial by G.T. You see the poor man is extremely thin skinned and morbidly sensitive. I told him that in publishing *as editorial* any thing communicated by another, a London editor pays him the highest compliment & puts his offering in the best way of being read — which is true. But Pillsbur is not comforted, & don't like to be robbed of his thunder. I have read what G.T. or some one else (most probably G.T.) has said of Douglass. All that he says is true. No guarantee of his moral character, or his anti-slavery course, is given — and the article is penned with manifest caution. Still, I think Thompson ought to have alluded to Douglass's shortcomings, or else have declined to notice his book. It is my impression that he is unduly [illegible] & that Joseph Sturge's authority over him is considerable.

Pillsbury says he will bring the wrath of the Empire, New Broad St, and Boston on his head if he comes out against G.T. I told him he need ~~can~~ not care for the two first, and that I will guarantee him from the last. I think our friends in Boston are in the right not to quarrel with G.T. after all his past sacrifices & services, unless they are forced to do so, and I told P.P. that Garrison is not the man to hold back his testimony in favor of Thompson or any one else, when it is really demanded at his hands. Thompson is entitled to great forbearance — and until he evinces hostility, his errors should be gently dealt with. As to what has been said in the way of comparing the American slave with the English freeman, to the disadvantage of the latter, I attribute it solely to some oversight. It most probably was put in by somebody without G.T.'s knowledge and he may have never seen it.

Pillsbury also remarks that the Advocate has got little countenance from Thompson. This is true; and more especially since the London Conference, which you may remember was not noticed in the Advocate to his credit. I said very little; but that little has irritated him exceedingly against me — whom he looked upon (as I was in degree) as a disciple of his; but not on that account authorized to depart from the truth in a statement of facts. In circumstances & position I am perfectly independent of him — although it was, as a matter of feeling, exceedingly painful to me to be placed in any degree in a state of antagonism to him.

P. P. has an idea that I do not favor his remaining. The truth is, that if his remaining depended on any good that he could do here, I would think his time thrown away. But of England & Scotland he knows more from actual residence than I do, & has far better informants in the friends of the cause there. When they encourage him, he should by all means stay. When he wishes for rest and a home, he is always welcome here; & this he knows very well.

His state of health, perhaps, and his somewhat egotistic sensitiveness, combined with a lively imagination & his peculiar temperament, lead him to magnify the importance of difficulties — to think more of the harm they may do to the cause, and of the influence he may wield against them than I think justified by the facts of the case. Still it is well that he should feel as if he had work to do and was able to do it

About Mr. Armstrong & Mr. Estlin, my wife remarked that what Mr. A. has said might as well have been left unsaid. But Mr. A. is an Irishman & demonstrative, and it is no wonder that at this time he keenly feels the absence of that tender regret which is felt by so many of Mr. Estlin's surviving friends. Mr. E. was somewhat cold & distant to demonstrative, impetuous, rash people. I know he held back from Mr. A. on this account. I wonder how he was so cordial & confidential towards me, who am not unlike Mr. A. in my tendencies. I attribute the difference to the fact that Mr. E. ~~had to~~ looked a good deal to me for his information when he began his anti slavery labours and this brought on a degree of intimacy which was a great blessing and gratification to me. Of course you ~~will~~ have seen by this time Rev. Mr. James's admirable memoir of him. It is faithful & true, & as far as I can see, without exaggeration.

You are aware that Miss Julia Griffiths is in England working away with all hands for her protege. She does not disturb me — for I know her efforts are only for an individual & for a time. Ours are for a race & for mankind.

You will gather from what I have said that Mr. Armstrong sent his letter open to me accompanied by a note from himself, & that I send this letter by way of explanation of that, and some other matters

Yours ever truly

Richd D. Webb

Ms. B.1.6 v.15, p.21